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ABSTRACT

The charge of the University of Rhode Island's Ad Hoc Committee on Religious and Cultural Celebrations in the Library was to: investigate all opportunities for the library to educate the campus community about religious and cultural holidays; consider all the major religions of the world and the possibility of having displays for the symbols of religious holidays; make recommendations to the director of possible courses of action; and assume no money beyond a token amount is available. The major religions of the world and most important holidays were identified as: (1) Christianity (Easter, Christmas); (2) Judaism (Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur, Passover, Channukah); (3) Islam (Ramadhan/Eidul Fitr (or Eid al Fitr), Eidul Adha(or Eid al Adha)); (4) Hinduism (Divali); (5) Buddhism (Buddha's Day); and (6) other (Chinese New Year). A timeline for these holidays and suggestions for displays and programs were developed. The committee decided to have the Multicultural Center, working with student organizations and interested individuals on campus, coordinate the displays and events, while remaining in close communication with the library. An 11-year calendar (1996-2006) of the recommended holidays, brief descriptions of each holiday, and a list of undergraduate student organizations are attached. (DLS)

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ED 424 873

Ad hoc committee on religious and cultural celebrations in University Libraries.

Charge: To investigate all opportunities for the library to educate the campus community about religious and cultural holidays. Consider all the major religions of the world and the possibility of having displays similar to our traditional Christmas Tree for the symbols of those other religious holidays. Make recommendations to the Director of Libraries by March 1, 1996 of possible courses of action.

Money: Assume no money is available other than a token amount of maybe $100. We might be able to purchase or find a display case or table.

Committee Members:

Andree Rathemacher (chair)
Amar Lahiri
Donna Gilton
Sheila Black Grubman

I am available for consultation if need be.

thanks, michael.

IR057241

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Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Religious and Cultural Celebrations in the Library

April 2, 1996

Committee members:

Andrée Rathemacher, Library Reference, Chair
Sheila Black Grubman, Faculty Senate
Amar Lahiri, Library Technical Services
Donna Gilton, Graduate School of Library and Information Studies
Mohammed Sharif, Economics

The Ad Hoc Committee on Religious and Cultural Celebrations in the Library was formed in December 1995. It was formed in response to concerns of members of the campus community that it was inappropriate for the Library to display a tree at Christmas while not honoring any non-Christian religious holidays.

It's charge was: "To investigate all opportunities for the Library to educate the campus community about religious and cultural holidays. Consider all the major religions of the world and the possibility of having displays similar to our traditional Christmas Tree for the symbols of those other religious holidays. Make recommendations to the Director of Libraries by April 2, 1996. Assume no money is available other than a token amount of maybe $100. We might be able to find or purchase a display case or table."

The Ad-hoc Committee decided that the fairest way to decide what holidays to recognize in the Library would be to identify the major religions of the world and to pick a few major holidays from each one. It was felt that for the most part it was better to stick with religious holidays as opposed to cultural celebrations, as there was no rational basis for including or excluding a given cultural celebration, yet defining major religions and their celebrations would be fairly straight forward.

We initially identified the eight major religions of the world as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto. (The *World Book Encyclopedia*, 1994, vol. 16. p. 214.) Upon consultation with Professor Yong C. Kim of the Philosophy Department, as well as through some research, it became clear that Confucianism is not really considered a religion; instead, it is a philosophy, and furthermore, there is really no major holiday associated with it that is universally celebrated. Regarding Taoism and Shintoism, we learned that only a very small percentage of the population of China and elsewhere observes these religions and furthermore that there are really no major religious days associated with them. We decided that Chinese New Year would be an appropriate substitute for holidays from these three religions. The Chinese New Year is the one main holiday that is celebrated in China. While this holiday is not strictly "religious" — it is more cultural — it nonetheless has some religious significance, at least more than the New Year's holiday in the West, for example.

Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Brunei, Laos, Macao, and Mauritius (Weaver, Robert S. *International Holidays*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 1995). We identified the following holidays as the most important for each major religion:

Christianity

- Easter
- Christmas

Judaism

- Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur
- Passover
- Channukah

Islam

- Ramadhan/Eidul Fitr (or Eid al Fitr)
- Eidul Adha (or Eid al Adha)

Hinduism

- Divali (or Deepavali)

Buddhism

- Buddha's Day (or Vesak Day or Visakha Bucha)

Other

- Chinese New Year (Nian)

The timeline for when these holidays are celebrated in academic year 1996 – 1997 is as follows*:

September

- Rosh Hashanah
- Yom Kippur

November

- Diwali

December

- Channukah
- Christmas

January/February

- Ramadhan/ Eidul Fitr
- Chinese New Year

March/April

- Easter
- Passover
- Eidul Adha

June

- Buddha's Day

*Note: The exact date for many holidays depends on the lunar calendar, and thus varies from year to year. Please see attached chart for exact date of holidays for given year.

The Ad-Hoc Committee believes that the Library could celebrate these holidays in a number of ways. The Committee recommends that the primary means of recognizing these holidays in the Library and educating the campus about their significance would be through the use of displays in the main lobby of the Library.

The Library could also encourage organizations on campus to hold events related to these holidays in the Library, such as lectures, video showings, etc.

The Library could also keep in touch with campus organizations independently planning various cultural and religious events and advertise such events prominently in the Library.

We arrived at the following suggestions for celebrating each of the holidays:

Rosh Hashanah/ Yom Kippur:

In a display case, show such items as prayer books, photographs of people celebrating these holidays, a Jewish prayer shawl, and a shofar (Ram's horn). Items such as these should be accompanied by a description of the holidays, their significance, and how they are celebrated.

Divali:

In a display case, show items related to the holiday. Items should be accompanied by a description of the holiday, its significance, and how it is celebrated.

Channukah:

In a display case, show items such as a menorah or a dreidle. Items such as these should be accompanied by a description of the holiday, its significance, and how it is celebrated.

In the Library lobby, have an electric menorah and light one candle at a time on the appropriate day. Have "Happy Channukah" signs up in the lobby.

Christmas:

The traditional Library Christmas tree could be displayed. In addition, a display case could show, for example, images of Madonna and Child as seen by many different cultures, nativity creches from around the world, Christmas carols of the world, pictures showing how Christmas is celebrated in different areas of the world, Christmas decorations/ornaments, especially old ones or ones from abroad, picture books about Christmas. Items such as these should be accompanied by a description of the holiday, its significance, and how it is celebrated.

Programming ideas for this holiday might include a Christmas concert with carols from around the world, a Christmas film series, etc.

Ramadhan / Eidul Fitr:

In a display case, show items such as pictures of people celebrating these holidays, Islamic art and calligraphy, and a description of the holidays, their significance, and how they are celebrated. Items such as these should be accompanied by a description of the holidays, their significance, and how they are celebrated.

Hold a video showing in the Library of these holidays being celebrated, or, because of the importance of discussion in the Islamic faith, hold a discussion on Ramadhan somewhere in the Library.

Chinese New Year:

In a display case, show items such as Chinese coins, firecrackers, mandarin or kumquat trees or branches of blossom and pussy willow, apples and oranges, red and gold paper scrolls with messages of good fortune in Chinese characters, a "money tree", and pictures of people celebrating the holiday, a Chinese New Year's parade, etc. Many traditional decorations for the Chinese New Year would be available at a local Chinese grocery store. Items on display should be accompanied by a description of the holiday, its significance, and how it is celebrated.

Easter:

In a display case, display items with religious significance, such as crucifixes, Paschal candles, etc. Avoid Easter eggs and bunnies because they detract from the religious significance of the holiday. Items should be accompanied by a description of the holiday, its significance, and how it is celebrated.

Passover:

In a display case, show a Passover plate, the Haggadah, Elijah's cup, etc.. Items such as these should be accompanied by a description of the holi-

day, its significance, and how it is celebrated.

The Library could help advertise a Seder that Hillel might have; a Seder could be held in the Library.

Eidul Adha:

In a display case, show items such as pictures of people celebrating these holidays, Islamic art and calligraphy, and a description of the holidays, their significance, and how they are celebrated. Items should be accompanied by a description of the holiday, its significance, and how it is celebrated.

Hold a video showing in the Library of these holidays being celebrated.

Buddha's Day:

In a display case, show items such as Buddha images and portraits, incense and candles, and photographs of people celebrating this holiday.. Items such as these should be accompanied by a description of the holiday, its significance, and how it is celebrated.

The Committee felt that the ideal way to organize these celebrations would be to have the Multicultural Center, working with student organizations and interested individuals on campus, coordinate the displays and any events. We felt that the Multicultural Center would have both the expertise and interest to carry out this project on a consistent basis. The feeling of the committee was that librarians might not have the time or connections to do as good a job as the Multicultural Center would.

We do recommend, however, that somehow that the Library remain in close communication with the Multicultural Center about any displays or events planned. We felt that this would most appropriately be the role of the current LEXPRES committee, as they already work with displays in the Library.

One of our committee members, Prof. Mohammed Sharif, spoke informally with Melvin Wade, the Director of the Multicultural Center, who appeared interested in working with us on this project.

Student organizations should be approached for help with the displays, as well as individuals who have identified themselves as interested in participating by lending items to be displayed, etc.

The Ad-Hoc Committee has identified the following organizations on campus which might be interested in helping out:

- Multicultural Center
- Hillel
- Muslim Students Association (both undergraduate and graduate)

- Indian Students Association
- Asian Students Association
- Southeast Asian Students Association
- Dr. Mohammed Sharif, Economics Dept.
- The University Chaplains
- Association of Religion in Intellectual Life

Any events taking place in the Library could be advertised in the *Good 5¢ Cigar*, The *University Pacer*, the Multicultural Center's newsletter, and the *Narragansett Times*.

Attached is a ten year calendar of the recommended holidays, brief descriptions of each holiday, a current list of undergraduate student organizations, and a copy of the Ad Hoc committee's original charge.

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Christmas	Dec. 25	Dec. 25	Dec. 25	Dec. 25	Dec. 25	Dec. 25	Dec. 25	Dec. 25	Dec. 25	Dec. 25	Dec. 25
Easter	Apr. 7	Mar. 30	Apr. 12	Apr. 4	Apr. 23	Apr. 15	Mar. 31	Apr. 20	Apr. 11	Mar. 27	Apr. 16
Rosh Hashanah	Sep. 14/15	Oct. 2/3	Sep. 21/22	Sep. 11/12	Sep. 30/Oct. 1	Sep. 18/19	Sep. 7/8	Sep. 27/28	Sep. 16/17	Oct. 4/5	Sep. 23/24
Yom Kippur	Sep. 23	Oct. 11	Sep. 30	Sep. 20	Oct. 9	Sep. 27	Sep. 16	Oct. 6	Sep. 25	Oct. 13	Oct. 2
Passover (first day)	Apr. 4	Apr. 22	Apr. 11	Apr. 1	Apr. 20	Apr. 8	Mar. 28	Apr. 17	Apr. 6	Apr. 24	Apr. 13
Channukah (first day)	Dec. 7	Dec. 24	Dec. 13	Dec. 4	Dec. 23	Dec. 10	Nov. 30	Dec. 20	Dec. 8	Dec. 26	Dec. 16
Diwali (or Deepavali)	Nov. 10	Oct. 30	Oct. 19	Nov. 7	Oct. 26	Oct. 15	Nov. 3	Oct. 24	Nov. 11	Nov. 1	Oct. 21
Ramadhan (first day)	Jan. 21	Jan. 9	Dec. 29	Dec. 18	Dec. 7	Nov. 26	Nov. 15	Nov. 4	Oct. 23	Oct. 12	Oct. 1
Eidul Fitr (or Eid al Fitr)	Feb. 20	Feb. 7	Jan. 29	Jan. 18	Jan. 6/Dec.26	Dec. 15	Dec. 5	Nov. 25	Nov. 13	Nov. 3	Oct. 23
Eidul Adha (or Eid al Adha)	Apr. 28	Apr. 16	Apr. 7	Mar. 27	Mar. 15	Mar. 5	Feb. 22	Feb. 10	Jan. 31	Jan. 20	Jan. 9/Dec. 30
Buddha's Day (or Vesak Day or Visakha Bucha)	Jun. 1	May. 21	May. 10	May. 29	May. 17	May. 7	May. 26	May. 15	Jun. 2	May. 22	May. 12
Chinese New Year (Nian)	Feb. 19	Feb. 7	Jan. 28	Feb. 16	Feb. 5	Jan. 24	Feb. 12	Feb. 1	Feb. 20	Feb. 9	Jan. 29

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Christmas

1. What it is - A celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

2. When it is celebrated - It was originally celebrated Dec. 25 in the West and Jan. 6th in the East, but now both dates are observed both east and west. Some western Christians, such as Roman Catholics and Episcopalians observe the entire period from Dec. 25 - Jan. 6 (otherwise known as the twelve days of Christmas). December 25 is observed as Christmas Day and January 6 marks for some churches the Epiphany, or the coming of the wise men to visit Jesus. The more formal churches also observe Advent, a period between Thanksgiving and Christmas when these churches prepare for the coming of Christ.

3. Where and how it is celebrated -

Christmas is one holiday that is celebrated around the world. In the U.S., it is celebrated with family gatherings, Christmas programs, church services, caroling, and gift giving. People in the U.S. and in northwestern Europe emphasize the use of the decorated Christmas tree.

In many countries somebody special brings gifts to children. The gift giver may be Santa Claus in the U.S., Father Christmas in Great Britain, Pere Noel in France, St. Nicholas in the Netherlands, the three wise men in Italy and some other countries, and Babushka (Grandmother) in Russia. It is believed that Santa Claus is based on St. Nicholas, an early church bishop who is considered by some to be the patron saint of children.

While people in countries with colder climates emphasize the idea of "White Christmas" in their style of celebration, people in warmer countries also take advantage of their climate. It is quite common for Mexicans and Mexican Americans to have posadas. They may spend several nights processing from one house to another, singing carols, and begging people to let them in (as Joseph begged the inn-keeper in the original Christmas story). When people reach the last place on the last night, they are invited to a party. As part of the party, children are blindfolded and they strike a pinata (a paper-mache puppet hanging from the ceiling) with sticks. Once the pinata is broken, toys, and other small gifts rain down upon the floor and all gather as many as they can. In some other warm countries, such as Jamaica, people may celebrate Christmas by heading to the beach! For southern hemisphere countries, such as Chile, South Africa, or Australia, December 25 is in the summer, which would also affect how the holiday is celebrated in those countries.

Most countries have developed their own repetoire of carols, even though, it is not unusual for countries sharing the same language to share some carols. Christmas decorations also vary. In most of the U.S., Christmas trees, holly, wreathes, and lighting are all emphasized. Electric window candles are popular in the Northeast. However, for many families creches which show Nativity scenes are also popular and in some countries, may dominate, instead of the Christmas tree. Certain plants, like hollies, ivy, and poinsettas have become important Christmas decorations, often with significant symbolism of their own.

Christmas - Display Ideas

1. Some Children See Him...
   a. essays and pictures from children on what Christmas mean to them.
   b. pictures of Jesus as seen by people from many cultures

2. Nativity Creches -
   This can be a good idea. I have been on campuses where international students make these creches to sell at Christmas bazaars. The style of these creches really vary from culture to culture. If we can find enough of these creches, they should make an excellent display.

3. Carols of the World -
   Show sheet music and recordings of carols from different countries.

4. Stories Behind Christmas Carols -
   This would probably be a wordy display, if enough materials were gathered, but it is worth considering.

5. Christmas Customs -
   Pictures showing how Christmas is celebrated in many places.

6. Christmas Decorations -
   Especially old ones or ones from abroad.

7. Christmas Cooking -
   What special cookies and other dishes do people make as they celebrate the season?

8. A Dickens Christmas -
   Customs and decorations from Charles Dickens' time

9. Christmas in the Media

10. Christmas in the Movies

11. Christmas in _____
   a. How is Christmas celebrated in specific countries? Show customs, carols, decorations, etc.
   b. How is Christmas celebrated in American cities, such as Boston, New York, or San Antonio, etc.?
   c. What Christmas and related events will take place in Providence, Boston, New London and other nearby cities? There could be a display with information on major events.

12. Christmas in Art

13. Christmas Cards

14. TV Specials on Christmas
15. Christmas in Bethlehem
16. Picture Books About Christmas
17. The Christmas Story - Various Depictions
18. Unusual Christmas Tree Ornaments

1. Christmas concert with carols from all over.

2. Lecture/discussion on the significance of Christmas.

3. Christmas in a Non-Christian Context
Christmas is one of the biggest holidays in Japan, even though most Japanese people are affiliated with other religions. In Russia, the Communists could never really stamp it out, even though they tried to change it. What does Christmas mean in situations, such as these?

4. Crafts for Christmas - A workshop on making decorations and gifts.

5. Who was Christ? What manner of man is this? Lecture or discussion.

6. If Christmas Didn't Exist, Would We Have to Create Another Holiday at That Time of the Year? Debate and discussion.

7. Christmas in the Movies
A film series with movies like A Christmas Carol (many versions exist) or It's a Wonderful Life, etc. Follow with discussion?

8. Christmas Stories/Readings/Puppet Show/Play: An Evening for the Family

9. Home For the Holidays: How to Cope
Show movie with that title and discuss.

10. A Medieval Christmas/ A Renaissance Christmas

The URI Library does not need to do these programs alone, and they probably shouldn't try to. However, the library may be able to create some very rich programs for the campus and community in collaboration with the following organizations:

1. URI. Multicultural Center
2. URI. Association for Religion in Intellectual Life (ARIL)
3. South Kingstown Public Library
4. South Kingstown. Neighborhood Guild
5. URI. Theatre Department., etc, etc., etc.
6. URI. Graduate Village. (There may be organizations there that may want to participate in this effort.)
7. Campus chaplains

Easter

Easter is the most important Christian holiday of the year. It celebrates the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

According to the Gospel of St. John, two days after Jesus' death, Mary Magdalen came to the cave where Jesus had been buried and found the tomb empty. An angel of the Lord told her that Jesus had risen. Soon, Jesus' followers began to see him and talk with him. Christians believe that Jesus' Resurrection means than they, too, can receive new life after death.

Most Christians observe Easter on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. Thus, Easter can occur on any Sunday between March 22 and April 25. In the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the celebration of Easter may take place later because these churches use additional factors in calculating the date of the festival.

Christians in many European countries call Easter *Pascha*. This word comes from the Hebrew word *pesah*, which means passover. Jesus was celebrating the Jewish festival of Passover shortly before he was arrested and sentenced to be crucified. Passover recalls how God rescued the Jews from slavery in Egypt. Christians believe that Easter, like Passover, is a time of rescue. They believe that by his death and resurrection, Jesus rescued them from eternal death and punishment for their sins.

Easter has always been associated closely with the coming of spring. The word Easter may have come from an early English word, Eastre. Some scholars say Eastre was the name of a pagan goddess of spring and fertility, whose feast was celebrated around this same time. Other scholars believe that the word Easter comes from a early German goddess named Ostara who was always accompanied by a hare — probably the ancestor of our modern Easter Bunny. The association of both the rabbit and eggs with Easter is probably the vestige of an ancient springtime fertility rite.

JEWISH HOLIDAYS*

The High Holy Days: Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur

The High Holidays, which occur in the fall, commemorate God's creation of the world and begin the new year (this year, 5756). During the these two holidays, Jews are instructed to examine their deeds and misdeeds during the previous year in preparation of the year to come. Jewish people believe that their fate for the coming year is written on Rosh Hashana and sealed on Yom Kippur. Honey is served at holiday meals and a special prayer is said when apple slices are dipped in honey asking God to grant a year that is "good and sweet." During the period between the two holidays Jewish people give to charity and try to make amends with one another for any transgressions they may have committed. The traditional greeting for Jews during this period is "May you be inscribed for a good year." Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, is a day of fasting and prayer. When the shofar (ram's horn) is blown at sunset at the end of the day of atonement, the fast is over and God's decisions for the coming year have been sealed.

Hanukkah

Hanukkah falls between late November and late December. It commemorates the reclaiming by the Maccabees (Jewish soldiers) of the Temple in Jerusalem from the Syrians in 167 B. C. E. According to legend, when the temple was reclaimed there was only enough pure oil to burn in the temple for one day, but it lasted for the eight days needed to purify more oil. Hanukkah is celebrated for eight days. Each night a candle (called the shamash) is used to light an additional candle until on the eighth night all of the candles are lighted (8+ the shamash). A special Menorah, called a Hanukkia, with places for 9 candles is used for this purpose. The Hanukkia is usually placed by a window to "publicize the miracle." On Hanukkah, Jewish people often give small gifts, traditionally money (gelt); children play with a four-sided top called a dreidel; and eat foods cooked in oil, such as pancakes ("latkes").

Passover (Pesach)

Passover (Pesach) comes in the early spring, usually in April. It is the most widely observed Jewish holiday. Passover is a celebration of God's freeing the Jews from slavery in Egypt. According to Exodus, God inflicted ten plagues on Egypt until the Pharaoh allowed the Jews, led by Moses, to leave. The Jews left in such haste, they did not allow their bread to rise. Traditionally, Jews eat unleavend bread (matzos) on Passover to commemorate the flight from Egypt. The seder is the traditional meal at Passover. Special foods are eaten at the seder such as matzos, bitter herbs and a mixture of nuts and raisins (or dates) and a special service is followed. A book (Haggadah) that tells the Passover story and contains songs is used during the Seder service. During the eight days of Passover, no leavening is used in cooking and only unleavend bread and foods appropriate for Passover are eaten.

*Information from Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People, and Its History, Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1991.

Divali, one of the most important festivals of the Hindu year, is often called by its Sanskrit name, *Dipavali*, which means 'a row of lights'. It lasts for five days in October-November. Like *Dassara* it combines many festivals in one. It was originally a fertility festival and is still celebrated as such in many parts of India.

The first day of Divali is dedicated to the goddesses Lakshmi and Parvati, and windows are kept open to welcome them into the homes. The trading castes, whose chief festival it is, close their accounts on this day. They make piles of coins on their ledgers and top the money with an image of Lakshmi, and worship her as the giver of wealth. The second day is devoted to gambling, especially gambling with dice. Men and women alike join in this pastime to celebrate the reconciliation of Siva and Parvati. Gambling is encouraged at this season, as a way of ensuring good luck for the coming year and in remembrance of Lord Shiva and Parvati's games of dice played on Mount Kailasa. Women also draw colourful geometrical designs known as *rangoli* on the floor near thresholds and in the courtyards of their houses.

The third day (full moon) commemorates the victory of Vishnu over the demon king Bali (or Naraka), although in some places in South India Balihi himself receives homage. On this day, which is also called *Lakshmi-puja*, the goddess is worshipped in the evening after an all-day fast. In Bengal the goddess Kali is the object of worship.

The fourth day is Davali proper, when little earthen bowls filled with oil are lighted in the evening and set up in rows inside and outside the

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house. This, it is said, commemorates the return of Rama to Ayodhya and his coronation, after an exile of fourteen years, and it takes place exactly twenty days after Dassara. But for those who follow the Vikram era, it is the day King Vikrramaditya ascended the throne and is celebrated by them as the New Year. Merchants perform religious ceremonies and open new account books.

The fifth day is called *Yama-dvitiya*, and commemorates an occasion when Yama dined with his sister Yamuna and commanded everyone to do likewise. Every male must dine in the house of his sister, cousin, or other female relative, and give her presents.

Diwali is also an important festival among members of the Jaina community, many of whom belong to the merchant class. For the Jainas, the day commemorates the passing into Nirvana (i.e., death) of Mahavira, the most recent of the Jaina Tirthankaras, or saints. The lighting of the lamps is explained as a material substitute for the light of holy knowledge that was extinguished with Mahavira's passing.

During this season people dress up, meet in the streets, go to the fair and give each other presents and sweets. Fireworks are lit. Some scholars maintain that Divali celebrates Mahabali or King Bali of Mahabalipura, whom the gods admired for his devotion and austerity. Vishnu took his earthly kingdoms from him leaving him only Patala, the Kingdom of the Dead, which points again at Divali being the day to commemorate the souls of the dead and care for them. The women in Maharashtra make effigies of Bali from dough and pray that Bali's

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kingdom may be restored. Another myth relates that on this day Vishnu finally killed the demon Narakasura and took back the jewels he had stolen. Narakasura was a rapist who kept 10,000 women in his impregnable castle Prag Jyotisha in the mountains. The liberation from this wicked Naraka-Asura (hell-demon) is well worth celebrating.

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Chinese New Year or *Nian*

The Chinese New Year, or *Nian*, is the most important Chinese festival, having been celebrated for over five thousand years. It begins anywhere between January 21 and February 19 and festivities usually last from two to five days.

The word "Nian", which in modern Chinese means "year", was originally the name of a monster beast that preyed on people the night before the beginning of the new year.

One legend goes that Nian had a very big mouth and could swallow many people with one bite. One day, an old man came and subdued Nian. This man turned out to be an immortal god, and before he left he told people to put red paper decorations on their windows and doors at year's end to scare away Nian if he came back again, since red is the color that Nian feared most.

The custom of putting up red paper and setting off firecrackers to scare away Nian continues to this day.

Before the New Year, every family gives their house a thorough cleaning, hoping to sweep away ill-fortune and make room for good luck. An effigy of the kitchen god os often burned, after having its mouth smeared with honey, so that only good reports of the household are presented to the Jade Emperor.

Homes are filled with flowers and fruit, especially apples and oranges, because red and orange are the colors of joy and apples are symbols of good luck for the new year. Doors and windows are decorated with red and gold paper scrolls which carry messages of good health, luck, long life, prosperity, and happiness. Large pine and cypress branches are placed in a vase and decorated with old coins, paper flowers, and other adornments. This is the traditional "money tree", a symbol of prosperity.

New Year's Eve is very carefully observed. Supper is a feast, with all family members present. After dinner, the whole family sits up for the night while playing cards or board games. It is said that the longer children can stay up, the longer their parents will live. Every light is supposed to be kept on the whole night. At midnight, the sky is lit up with fireworks.

On New Year's morning, children receive presents of money wrapped in red paper from their parents. Families go from door to door greeting their relatives and neighbors and exchanging gifts. Old grudges are cast away. Everyone is on their best behavior on this day, taking care to think good thoughts and say kind words, since it is believed that what happens the first day of the year will influence events during the coming year.

The New Year is also a time for honoring ancestors and paying off debts, both to other people and to the gods. Special "god money" is often burned to the gods as an offering, along with paper pictures of horses, houses, college diplomas, etc.

"Gong hei fāt choy" — "Happy New Year!"

List of Muslim Holidays
(1996-97)

[Note: The events are based on Lunar Calendar which is eleven days shorter than the Gregorian (Solar) Calendar. Thus, the dates which are based on the sighting of the moon, come eleven days earlier every year, and rotate throughout the Gregorian year every thirty three years.]

Date of Event	Event	Background, Significance, and Celebration
Sunday January 21 1996	First of Ramadhan	Fasting from dawn to dusk throughout the month. Muslims all over the world abstain from food, drink, and husband-wife sexual relation during fasting. This trains the followers to control desires, correct bad habits, and be considerate of the poor and the needy.
Tuesday February 20 1996	Eidul Fitr	The Feast of breaking fast at the end of the Month of Ramadhan. People dress very nicely, perform a congregational prayer in the morning, then visit friends, neighbors, and relatives, exchange gifts, and feast together.
Saturday April 27 1996	Eidul Adha	Sacrifice animals following the tradition of Prophet Abraham (Peace Be Upon Him). This follows the period of Pilgrimage to Makkah by the able-bodied and affording Muslims for once-in-a-life-time Hajj. Muslims all over the world, irrespective of their pilgrimage, sacrifice animals, distribute the meat--1/3 to the poor, 1/3 to friends and relatives, and 1/3 to the family. Feast together.
Saturday May 18, 1996	New Year	Islamic Hijrah New Year. Started with the migration of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) from Makkah to Madinah.
Monday May 27, 1996	Ashura	A sad day for contemplation. The Prophet's grandson, Hussain was martyred in a battle against attempts to establish rulership contrary to Islamic (democratic) system.
Saturday July 27, 1996	Mawlid An-Nabi	Prophet Muhammad's (Peace Be Upon Him) Birthday; Discussion about the Prophet's Life and Mission.
Saturday December 7 1996	Isra & Miraj	Prophet Muhammad's (Peace Be Upon Him) spiritual travel from Madinah to Jerusalem, then his ascension to the Seventh Space in the Universe.

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Muslims have only two major holiday celebrations, which follow periods of hard warship. These two celebrations are being celebrated by Muslims allover the world since the start of *Islam*, 1416 years ago. These celebrations are:

1. Feast of the Sacrifice (Eid Ul-Adha)

A) The Origin and Background:

This holiday follows the period of *Pilgrimage* when Muslims from allover the world visit Maccah to perform the following rituals, which are dated back to prophet *Abraham (Peace Be Upon Him.(PBUH))*:

o They visit *The Kaabah*, the first house built by *Abraham (PBUH)* and his son, prophet *Ismail (PBUH)* to warship the one and only ***God (Allah)*** on earth;

o They pray where the footsteps of prophet *Abraham (PBUH)* exist;

o They drink from the well of *Zam Zam* which gushed for prophet *Ismail (PBUH)* and his mother *(Hajar PBUH)*, prophet *Abraham's* wife;

o They walk between the two mountains *Safat* and *Marwah* where *Hajar (PBUH)* walked in search for water for *Ismail (PBUH)*;

o They reject *Satan* like *Abraham (PBUH)* by throwing stones at the three locations where *Satan* appeared to prophet *Abraham (PBUH)* and tried to deviate him from following *Allah's* orders;

o They spend a whole day at the mountain of *Arafat* worshipping, praying, and supplicating to *Allah*;

o They sacrifice a lamp, like prophet *Abraham (PBUH)* who was directed to slaughter a lamb inreplacement of the sacrifice of his son *Ismail (PBUH)*, and distribute its meat to the poor and to friends and relatives.

B) The significance of Eid Ul-Adha

This celebration is one of two major holiday celebrations. It follows the period of hard warship during *Pilgrimage*. Pilgrimage is one of the five fundamental pillars of islamic faith. Muslims allover the world share with those who performed the *Pilgrimage* by celebrating this occasion. Eid Ul-Adha is observed on the tenth day of *Zul Hijjah*, the last month of the islamic lunar calendar year.

C) How Muslims Observe Eid Ul-Adha

All over the world, Muslims celebrate this occasion by praising *Allah* throughout the preceding night. Dress nicely in the morning and perform a congregational prayer early in the morning (from 8:00 to 10:00 am), then slaughter a sacrifice (lamp, caw, camel...etc.) prepare its meat and distribute it: 1/3 to the poor, 1/3 to friends and relatives, and 1/3 to the family. They spend the rest of the day playing, visiting, exchanging gifts, and eating together.

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2. The Feast of Breakfasting (Eid Ul-Fitr):

A) The Origin and Background:

This holiday follows the period of *Fasting* when Muslims allover the world fast for the whole month of *Ramadan* from dawn to sunset. They abstain not only from food, drink, and husband-wife sexual relation, but also from indecent acts, bad habits, and sins. Fasting train Muslims to control their desires, correct their bad habits, and be more considerate of the poor and needy.

B) The significance of Eid Ul-Fitr

This celebration is one of two major holiday celebrations. It follows the period of hard warship during *Fasting*. Fasting is one of the five fundamental pillars of Islamic faith. Muslims allover the world celebrate this occasion during the month of *Ramadan*, which is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar year.

C) How Muslims Observe Eid Ul-Fitr

All over the world, Muslims celebrate the end of *Ramadan* by praising *Allah* throughout the night. They pay poor-dues *(Zakah)*, which is one of the five fundamental pillars of Islamic faith, to bring joy to the poor and needy. They dress nicely in the morning and perform a congregational prayer early in the morning (from 8:00 to 10:00 am). They spend the rest of the day playing, visiting, exchanging gifts, and eating together.

Important Note: The above-mentioned Muslim celebrations follow a lunar calendar. The lunar year is eleven days shorter than the Gregorian (Solar) year. Hence, these celebrations come eleven days ~~later~~ earlier every year, and they rotate throughout the Gregorian year every thirty three years.

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Buddha's Day, or *Vesak Day* or *Visakha Bucha*

Buddha's Day or, "Full Moon of the Buddha", is considered by many to be the most holy day in the Buddhist year, as it commemorates three events which all occurred on the same date—Siddhartha Gautama Buddha's birth, his attainment of enlightenment, and his death.

This celebration occurs on the full-moon day of Visakha, which falls in April or May. It is celebrated the world over with immense piety, devotion, and fervor.

It is common to listen to sermons on the life of the Buddha. In Thailand, the traditional sermon continues through the entire night. It begins with the wedding of Suddhodana and Mahamaya, the Buddha's parents, and concludes with the distribution of the Buddha's relics and an accounting of the reasons for the decline of Buddhism in India.

Buddha images and portraits are taken out in a procession on this day. Other common practices include watering Bodhi trees within monastery compounds, burning incense and candles, fasting, pilgrimages to sacred sites, and the bathing of Buddha images. Buddhists also practice charity on this day, such as feeding the poor and treating the sick in hospitals.

URI STUDENT SENATE, INC.
RECOGNIZED and/or FUNDED ORGANIZATIONS

as of November 1995

Informational notes:
- • *denotes funded and/or eligibility for funding by budget*
- •• *denotes funded through Club Sports & Intramural Council*
- - *For mailing information, please see page 3 of this document.*

Name	*Contact*	*Address*	*Phone*
• Amateur Radio Club	Bill Ham	MU 302D	792-2487
• American Marketing Association (AMA)	Barbara Preskar	MU 133	792-2585
Animal Veterinary Science Club	Michelle Rocque	MU 201	792-5508
• Anthropological Society	Zachary Lyman	MU 350	783-9687
• Asian Students Association	Megume Bae	MU 348	783-8434
• Awakenings	Nedra Curtis	MU 135	874-1919
Best Buddies	Kim Bermain	MU 201	782-6076
• Ballroom Dancing	Kristen Coleman	MU 201	783-3817
Campus Advance for Christ	Allana Hewitt	MU 321	783-0115
• Cape Verdean Students	Madeline Rodriques	Senate	874-3175
• Chess Club	Bobby Chanthaphousang	MU 201	792-3873
•• Club Sports and Intramural Council	Laura Milne	MACKAL	792-2029
College Democrats	Tara Barbara	MU 201	874-3464
• College Liberals	Catherine Joyal	MU 201	885-2505
College Republicans	Jonathan Cross	MU 201	792-2261
• Commuter Association	John Larch	MU 317 A	792-4136
• Cramer's Sabers Company of AUSA	Mark Wilson	MU 201	792-2385
•• Crew Team	Steven Kish	MACKAL	789-2011
• Debate Union	Rachel Turner	Ind. 309	792-4739
• Eagle Forum Collegians	Kristy Bartholomew	MU 201	284-4221
• Equestrian Club	Gina Leiss	MU 201	874-1685
•• Equestrian Team	Paige Casey	MACKAL	874-1565
• Fencing Club	Lori Lopes	MU 201	782-2344
• Financial Mgtmnt A.	Kevin Lind	MU 201	782-4053
• Flavor Unit	Liatan Yussuff	MU 201	874-3106
• Gaming Club	Dave Inkpen	MU 201	789-9544

Name	Contact	Address	Phone
• Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Association	Brent Reinhard	MU 130	792-5480
• Good 5¢ Cigar	Karl Lyons	MU 125	789-1542
• Great Swamp Gazette	Daniel McGinley	MU 352	792-2700
Habitat for Humanity	Kate Bartel	MU 352	874-1987
Hillel		Hillel House	792-2740
• Hmong American Students Org. (HMAS)	Chai Mee Kue	MU 201	782-8918
•• Ice Hockey Team	Jim Argenti	MACKAL	792-2029
• Independent Students Association	Pam Downey	MU 301	792-5430
Interfraternity Council	Peter Ilberg	MU 306	792-2913
• • International Students Association (ISA)	Pam Downey	Int.Stu.Serv.Cntr.	782-4618
InterVarsity Christian Fellowship	Kory Romanat	MU 201	789-7784
• Judo Club	Johnny Ventura	Mu 201	874-1131
•• Lacrosse (M)	Daniel Curney	MACKAL	789-9688
•• Lacrosse (W)	Teal Petaja	MACKAL	874-1934
• Latin American Student Association	Lillian Vasquez	MU 306	792-4805
Memorial Union Board	Celeste Sorel	MU 204	792-2374
• National Society of Black Engineers	Samuel Dealiedimeda	Bliss 401	783-0652
• Native American Student Organization	Brian L. Brown	MU 201	792-2261
Newman Club	Carol Maddok	Catholic Center	792-2324
• Outing Club	Richard Nadeau	MU 201	943-5395
Panhellenic Council	Jill Weiner	MU 306	792-2913
• People Organized for Women's Equality and Resilience	Lisa Gray	MU 346	792-3844
Pre-Physical Therapy	Christy Evans	MU 201	792-3544
• Professions in Medicine	Lisa Menard	MU 201	792-3773
• Renaissance	Mary-Lyn Csonka	MU 125	792-5897
• Roller Hockey	Andrew Essam	MU 201	783-5191
• Rude Island Productns	Fred Hazard	MU 119	482-1077
•• Rugby (M)	Charles Fedorko	MACKAL	782-8329
•• Rugby (W)	Ann Bibeault	MACKAL	874-3345
• Sailing Club	Russel Newman	MU 131	783-0797
•• Sailing Team	Laura Milne	MACKAL	792-2029
• Ski Club	Mike Dugas	MU 201	789-0536
•• Ski Team	Gregory Walsh	MACKAL	783-2899
• Society for Creative Anachronism	Chris Merissette	MU 201	789-4384

Name	Contact	Address	Phone
• Speakeasy	Quentin Ireland	MU 302A	789-3363
• Student Entertainment Committee (SEC)	James Salmon	MU 208	792-5298
• Student Senate	Kenneth Peskin	MU 201	792-2261
• Students for Life	Melanie Pearce	MU 302B	792-6512
• Students Organized Against Racism	Beth Morse	MU 346	874-3753
• Total Godhead	David Bettencourt	MU 301	789-5273
• Uhuru Sa Sa	Sharon Maxiw	MU 342	874-4477
Undergraduate Muslin Students	Waleed A. Muhammad	MU 201	461-0479
Underwater Expeditions Club	David Wright	MU 201	782-2797
• URI Students for Social Change	Jessica Simmons	MU 127	792-2759
• URI-TV	Thomas Krawuak	MU 331	782-9487
•• Volleyball (M)	Pete Weremay	MACKAL	792-2029
• Waterpolo	Andrew Abbott	MU 201	783-3643
• WRIU	Nicole Archambault	MU 326	789-4949
Zoology Undergraduate Society	Paula Phaneuf	MU 201	792-2261

IMPORTANT:

If address is listed as MU 201 and/or a phone number is listed as 792-2261, this indicates that the organization has no formal office. Mailboxes for all organizations are located in this office. All organizations should use the following address for incoming on and off-campus mail:

(name of organization)
c/o URI Student Senate, Inc.
Memorial Union
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI 02881